

CLAIMS

1. A method for call processing in a call center comprising the steps of:

receiving at least one incoming telephone call over a communications network;

presenting at least one interactive menu which includes a plurality of selections for

5 processing the incoming call, wherein the plurality of selections includes a queuing option which is configurable to assign a priority to at least one incoming call, place a call in a call queue for future routing, and simultaneously providing access to a plurality of automated interactive functions; and

10 in response to at least one detected event, routing the incoming call from the call queue to a selected destination.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the selected destination is at least one call attendant.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the detected event comprises a change in an availability status of at least one call attendant.

15 4. The method of Claim 3 wherein an order for routing at least one incoming call to the at least one call attendant is based on an assigned priority.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning a priority to said incoming call is performed by extracting identification information from the incoming call and using the identification information to retrieve priority information from memory.

20 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein said step of assigning a priority is based upon the order of the incoming call was received.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of routing the incoming call is performed during performance of one of the plurality of automated interactive functions.

8. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step or routing the at least one incoming call is performed upon detected completion of one of the plurality of automated interactive functions.

9. A system for processing telephone calls comprising:

a communications network interface device configurable for receiving and processing of at least one incoming telephone call and providing at least one automated interactive function;

a queuing application in connection with the network interface which is configured to assign a priority to at least one incoming call and to simultaneously hold at least one incoming telephone call in a call queue while at least one incoming telephone call is hosted in the communications network interface; and

a call distributing apparatus in connection with at least one communications network interface which is configured to route at least one incoming call to a designated destination upon receiving indication from the queuing application.

10. The system of Claim 9 wherein the destination is a customer telephone system which supports call attendants.

11. The system of Claim 9 wherein at least one of: the communications network interface, the queuing application, the call distributing apparatus; are resident on a central office switch in a public switched telephone network (PSTN).

12. The system of Claim 9 wherein at least one of: the communications network interface, the queuing application, the call distributing apparatus; are resident on customer premise equipment (CPE).

13. The system of Claim 9 wherein the communications network interface is configured on voice response unit (VRU) interfaced with the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

14. The system of claim 9 wherein the queuing application is configured on a network based application server.

15. The system of Claim 9 wherein the call distributing apparatus is configured on an automatic call distributor (ACD).

16. The system of Claim 15 wherein the ACD routes the at least one incoming call to a customer PBX system over data network.